

Testimony of
California Arts Council Member Marcy Friedman,
submitted to the California Performance Review Commission
Monday, September 27, 2004

The acronym “CPR”: The CAC has been resuscitated—it still has the breath of life, but it is being starved to death by lack of funding. My concern is that the *coup de grace* will be the placement of the CAC in an agency-- in a newly reorganized government-- that will either be so far from its mission as to be out of sync with its purpose, or else it will be so invisible within a large agency that it will virtually be buried in the bureaucracy.

The California Performance Review has recommended the CAC to the California Service Corps. Their purpose is to promote and facilitate volunteerism and philanthropy.

Suggestions for inclusion within this group are:

- **California State Summer School For The Arts**
- **California Conservation Corps**
- **Governor’s Mentoring Partnerships**
- **Academic Volunteer and Mentor Service Programs**
- **Senior Corps**

What I struggle with is how the CAC fits in here. I know it to be a re-granting agency with broad associations within the nonprofit field. While the end-users in the field are literally thousands of volunteers for nonprofit art providers, the CAC is not a nonprofit agency. There is not even a mechanism for the receipt of a charitable donation to the Arts Council.

This is not the venue for a discourse on the value of the arts, but how we value the arts is inexorably tied to how we value the CAC and the role it has played in California. Placing the CAC within an appropriate agency is critical to its relevance. Much of what the CAC does is all about nurturing and encouraging the creative process, for creativity is the lifeblood of the information age, upon which rests the future of the economy of this state.

So, if the CAC isn’t a good fit with the California Service Corps, where does it belong? If we need to re-tool the mechanics of government, then perhaps

what is missing is a re-organizational category that embraces both artistic and cultural services that serve in the public interest.

The California Performance Review Commission does not acknowledge the link between the CAC and the \$5.4 that California nonprofit arts groups (generally known as the field) contribute to the state's economy. Nor is there any mention of the 89,000 arts-centered private and nonprofit businesses that operate in the state. With significant revenues and millions in taxes being spun off of these events and businesses, wouldn't it be reasonable to acknowledge the revenue-producing power of the creative community through the establishment of a division for cultural services that might bring together various agencies that are more similar than they are disparate?

For example, numerous museums and state owned collections are managed by an assortment of agencies such as Parks and Recreation, State Archives, the resources warehouses of art and artifacts and the State Library. All share similar needs for collection management, maintenance, marketing and administration and yet, all operate independently. Placing all arts and culture related entities under one umbrella department would clarify their purpose and foster collaboration.

California's public art collection

In addition, there are no clear rules and guidelines for which agency oversees the state's public art collection – its management and conservation or even who holds responsibility for maintenance of these art works. The decision of whether a new building will or will not be eligible for public art is up to DGS (Department of General Services) and the State Architect (a decision which theoretically, can and does change from administration to administration.) There is no policy and no single agency that is deemed "in charge." It seems logical to me that the CAC, with its long experience with the art field, should be a significant player in all public art decisions.

There is clearly a need to simplify the way affinity groups are placed in governmental departments. If the goal of the California Performance Review Commission was to make government slim and trim, then the bottom line is to keep it simple. Why would an arts agency be reporting to an agriculture agency? Or a museum to the parks department? If we are to improve upon the bureaucracy, then we need to develop creative, but logical approaches to solving the problems of encumbered government.

Why make it difficult? Simply group together all the museums, the CAC, the historical collections, the management and maintenance of public art, the state archives, the state library and anything else that is categorically about culture, arts, history and preservation into a new office of cultural affairs. The spin-offs would be collaboration and the synergy of closely related organizations working together.

Thank you